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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/532,907	03/21/2000	Douglas J. Holmi	02103-36601	6793
26162	7590	11/04/2005	EXAMINER	
FISH & RICHARDSON PC P.O. BOX 1022 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55440-1022			GRAHAM, ANDREW R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2644	

DATE MAILED: 11/04/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/532,907	<b>Applicant(s)</b> HOLMI ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Andrew Graham	<b>Art Unit</b> 2644	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 October 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23, 25-28 and 31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23, 25-28 and 31 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                        | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                    |

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## DETAILED ACTION

### *Election/Restrictions*

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-17 and 22-28, drawn to electroacoustical transducers mounted in a seat back, classified in class 381, subclass 301.
- II. Claims 18-21, drawn to a stereo speaker arrangement in a vehicle, classified in class 381, subclass 302. A search for group II would not include class 381, subclass 388, which would be necessary for group I.
- III. Claim 31, drawn to a vehicle sound system comprising a center console mounted electroacoustical transducer outputting a center channel signal, classified in class 381, subclass 389. For this group, it would not be necessary to search in either of the above cited subclasses for groups I and II because no pertinent art to the subject of group III exists, as groups I and II pertain to stereo speaker arrangements, and group III pertains to a single, center channel speaker. A search for group III would also include class 381, subclass 27, which would not be required for the other two groups.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

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Inventions II and I are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the transducers of group II do not need to be mounted in seat backs to establish the positional relationship with the passenger seats. The subcombination has separate utility such as providing sound from speakers mounted explicitly in seat backs; also, such sound may be directed to a user not sitting as a passenger in a vehicle compartment, or implemented in the context of plural transducers identically outputting the same surround channel to passengers.

Inventions I and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention III has separate utility such as use in a vehicle, wherein speakers are not mounted in a seat back. Invention I has separate utility such as use outside of a passenger compartment of a vehicle or in a vehicle with no center channel output. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

Inventions II and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are

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distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention III has separate utility such as use in a vehicle wherein passenger seats are not mounted with a positional relationship of being substantially identically to, forward of, and in a direct field of transducers in the vehicle. Invention II may be utilized in a vehicle with no center channel output. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification and that searches required for Groups I, II, and III are not respectively required for each of the other groups, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143). Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

#### **Conclusion**

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Graham


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whose telephone number is 571-272-7517. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM (EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vivian Chin can be reached on 571-272-7848. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

ag  
October 31, 2005

  
VIVIAN CHIN  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600